FAQs: Studying for the Midterm

(NOTE: This is not a review of midterm concepts. Please review amongst yourselves, at the Sunday 5 PM review session, and in recitations. There will be no concept review sheet distributed.)

What types of questions will be on the mid-term?
Please refer to the course website: Prof. Chester has detailed the layout of the midterm under her Oct. 13 Powerpoint. www.colorado.edu/history/chester/IAFS1000.htm.

How much time would you recommend for each part of the mid-term?
You will have the entire class period for the mid-term (75 minutes). If you review thoroughly, the Africa map section should take no longer than 5 minutes. Then you should allow yourself 30 minutes for the ID section, which is the same length of time you have for quizzes. This will leave you 40 minutes for the essay question.

What are some tips for construction of a good essay?
An Internet search of "essay exam writing tips" turns up a wealth of websites affiliated with various colleges. I like the following site from the University of North Carolina: http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/essay-exams.html. These sites also have some very, very good strategies for test-taking in general. In brief, remember this when writing an essay:
--Read each essay choice carefully before choosing the one to answer.
--Outline your essay before proceeding to write.
--Make sure your essay has a main argument, elucidated clearly in the introduction.
--Consider writing an essay with a four or five-paragraph structure (intro, body, conclusion). Make sure each paragraph has a main point to it, then provide evidence to back those points.
--Need some one-on-one help with writing strategies before the exam? Come see your TA in her/his office hours. If you can't make it then, make an appointment with the Writing Center; see their website at http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html

How do I narrow down what may or may not be on the exam?
This may be the trickiest part of studying. It is up to you to have been paying attention throughout the course of the semester to ideas, concepts, or motifs that have come up in lectures and readings. If you have not taken notes all semester, or have missed a lot of lecture or recitation, it's going to be tough for you. Here are some ideas to consider as you study for on the exam:
--Organize a study group, ideally with some students who have done well on prior quizzes and/or have taken good notes. Get together, brainstorm, and bounce some ideas off each other. Find someone who will share notes with you from the day(s) you were absent.
--Go back and skim all of the lecture Powerpoints and the readings. Read the introduction and conclusion of each article in the reader to get the main points and arguments. This will at least give you a fighting chance on the IDs and essay question.
--Remember what was on the prior quizzes. There's a chance that there may be some repeat IDs, but there's a better chance that new IDs and essay questions will be analogous to the prior ones. For example, "Balfour Declaration" was an ID on Quiz #2, so maybe a question about the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence will show up; "Analogy" was an ID on Quiz #1, so maybe a question about Neustadt & May will be asked.
--While any of the main concepts of reading and lecture will be fair game for the exam, we will not ask unreasonable questions. Do NOT study the Iraq material assigned for this week—it will not be on the midterm. And don't stress about concepts or people that were only mentioned briefly in one of the readings.